Sale of captive power plants by SAIL

2494. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether SAIL has any propose to sell its captive power plants to reduce loss and to get more fund;

(b) if so, the reasons for constructing captive power plants in the past; and

(c) the reasons for distancing with them at present explaining the change that has caused the about-turn?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI BRAJ KISHORE TRIPATHY): (a) Government has approved SAIL's proposal for Financial & Business Restructuring, which includes conversion of some of the captive power plants of SAIL into a joint venture.

(b) In view of the unsatisfactory experience with the supply of power from utility grids/Electricity Boards, associated with conditions like load restrictions, improper voltage/frequency levels, occasional interruptions, captive power plants were set up to supplement the utility supply, to ensure rhythm of production and for the safety of personnel & equipment.

(c) Even after formation of the joint venture, the power generated would still be captive to the steel plants.

Import of steel

2495. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are importing steel from foreign countries;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether import of steel leads to decline in the prices of steel in the country; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to assist our steel industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI BRAJ KISHORE TRIPATHY): (a) and (b) As per the existing EXIM Policy, imports and exports of Iron and Steel are freely allowed. Any one, including the Government can import or export steel.

(c) Prices of steel are determined by the interplay of market forces. However, one of the factors for decline in the domestic prices of steel is the dumping of steel in India by some countries.

(d) Government have taken several steps to help the steel industry in the country. These *inter-alia* include;

* Enhanced allocation for infrastructure development, housing, power, highways in the last two budgets.
* Launching of a National Campaign for increasing demand for steel especially in non-traditional sectors.
* Setting up of an Institute for Steel Development and Growth (1NSDAG) with all major steel producers as members to enhance steel consumption all over the country.
* Rationalisation of excise and customs duty; streamlining of anti dumping machinery, enhanced projects financing through ECB route, speedy implementation of infrastructure/consumption projects etc.
* Rationalisation of duty credit rates under Duty Entitlement Pass Book (DEPB) Scheme on most of the iron and steel items to encourage export of iron and steel.
* Exclusion of freight and handling charges for computation of Excise Duty on steel despatched from stockyards of integrated steel plants.
* Reduction in duty on raw materials used in steel making.

Corporations for development of tribals

2496. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of TRIBALS AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the States which constituted Corporations for the development of tribals;